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REVIEW OF SECTORAL CLUSTERS: PROGRESS REPORT OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, established at the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, has held two of its four sessions. At its first session, which was held in New York from 11 to 15 September 1995, the Panel established its programme of work. The report on that session was issued as document E/CN.17/IPF/1995/3.

2. The second session of the Panel was held in Geneva from 11 to 22 March 1996. In accordance with the Panel's programme of work, there were substantive discussions of programme elements I.2, I.4, I.5, II, and III (a) and (b); there were initial discussions of programme elements I.1, I.3, III.2, IV and V.1 The report on the second session of the Panel is being issued as document E/CN.17/1996/24.

3. Following a decision taken by the Commission at its third session, a secretariat, headed by a coordinator, was established for the Panel in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat (DPCSD) through secondments and contributions from the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

4. FAO, ITTO, UNDP, UNEP, DPCSD, the World Bank and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity are effectively collaborating in supporting the work of the Panel through the informal High-Level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests.

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* E/CN.17/1996/1.

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5. The Panel's work is entirely funded from extrabudgetary resources and a trust fund has been established for voluntary contributions. To date, generous financial contributions have been received from Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, the United States of America and ITTO. In a decision taken at its second session, the Panel expressed its appreciation to those Governments and organizations that had made generous voluntary contributions to support the work of the Panel and its secretariat, and bearing in mind the fact that its work, as envisaged by the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, largely depended on the provision of extrabudgetary resources, invited all interested Governments and organizations to consider supporting the Panel with additional voluntary contributions.

6. The following Governments and organizations are supporting the work of the Panel through initiatives and contributions involving expert groups, seminars, conferences, studies and background papers: Australia, Portugal/Cape Verde/ Senegal, Denmark/South Africa/UNDP, Finland, Germany, Germany/Indonesia, Sweden/Uganda, Norway, Switzerland/Peru, Japan/Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. At its second session, the Panel recommended to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission, the adoption of a draft decision approving the Panel's request to hold its third session in Geneva from 9 to 20 September 1996 and its fourth session in New York for two weeks in 1997 and its request that provision be made for two sessional working groups to meet simultaneously during its third and fourth sessions.